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# CIA upset because Perle detailed eavesdropping

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The CIA is miffed that Assistant Defense Secretary Richard Perle, the soon-to-depart Pentagon arms control specialist, revealed details of past U.S. eavesdropping in Moscow in testimony before Congress last month, according to intelligence sources.

Mr. Perle, appearing before a joint session of the Senate Foreign Relations and Judiciary committees March 26, provided senators with details of what he described as "an extremely sensitive communications intercept" picked up in 1972 between the late Soviet leader Leonid Brezhnev and his military chief, the late Defense Minister Marshal Andrei Grechko.

Shortly after Mr. Perle's testimony, Acting CIA Director Robert Gates fired off an angry letter to Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger complaining that Mr. Perle had disclosed details about sensitive U.S. electronic eavesdropping on Soviet telephone communications in Moscow shortly before the SALT I arms treaty was signed in 1972, the sources said.

According to the sources, Mr. Perle's disclosures revealed that U.S. cryptologists had cracked certain Soviet codes and were listening to telephone communications in 1972.

U.S. intelligence officials last year mounted a campaign against unauthorized intelligence leaks, including threats to prosecute reporters for disclosing electronic communications intercepts under a 1950s espionage statute. No prosecutions yet have been brought.

Moscow embassy operations, currently the focus of public attention over Marine security guard espionage charges and the planting of Soviet electronic bugs, include some of the most sophisticated U.S. electronic eavesdropping equipment and operations, sources said.

At the March 26 hearing, Mr. Perle stated, "General Secretary Brezhnev ... got into communications with Marshal Grechko and we acquired that conversation."

The conversation, according to Mr. Perle, revealed that Mr. Brezhnev, shortly before signing the SALT I Treaty, sought and received assurances from Marshal Grechko that the Soviet heavy SS-19 nuclear missiles then under construction could be fitted inside the launch tubes of lighter SS-11 missiles.

Mr. Perle said the intercept was an example of Soviet negotiating deception that showed Mr. Brezhnev had plans to violate Article II of the SALT I pact, which bans each side from replacing any of its missiles with ones capable of carrying heavier warheads.

The SALT I treaty was signed along with the now-controversial anti-ballistic missile treaty. Both were ratified later, although sources said the 1972 intercept was never revealed to the Senate or the Joint Chiefs of Staff during ratification hearings because ad-

ministration officials wanted to avoid a battle on the Soviet deception, sources said.

Mr. Perle, who resigned earlier this year and is expected to leave the Pentagon shortly, testified before the Senate on U.S. interpretation of the ABM treaty, currently under debate by the administration and Congress over its relation to President Reagan's Strategic Defense Initiative.

Asked by the ranking Republican on the Foreign Relations Committee, Sen. Jesse Helms of North Carolina, to elaborate on the intercept, Mr. Perle said the Brezhnev-Grechko conversation "is not only the most dramatic instance of Soviet deception, but the one that carried the gravest consequences."

Mr. Perle testified that it was reported later in the press "with the results that the Soviets ceased immediately communicating over a system that we had otherwise been able to penetrate, with tremendous loss to our national security."

But the communications source, code-named "Gamma Guppy," first surfaced publicly in a column by Jack Anderson on Sept. 16, 1971. Gamma Guppy picked up telephone conversations from Mr. Brezhnev's limousine, using equipment on the top of the U.S. Embassy in Moscow.

After the 1971 disclosure, the Soviets began coding their limousine telephone calls to plug leaks, sources said, and Mr. Perle's disclosure of the fact that the Brezhnev-Grechko conversation had been intercepted and understood revealed that U.S. codebreakers had cracked the Soviet communications codes.

Further details about Gamma Guppy operations were revealed by the media in 1976, although Mr. Perle first disclosed last month that the conversations included Marshal Grechko, sources said.

Sources said Mr. Perle's revelations did not appear to constitute a serious security breach. U.S. officials presumed the Moscow code break was compromised in 1982, following the arrest of confessed Soviet spy Geoffrey A. Prime.

Prime admitted spying for the Soviets as a Russian-language specialist and cryptologist inside the most secret sections of Britain's Government Communications Headquarters. The Headquarters, known as GCHQ, conducts joint eavesdropping operations with NSA.

Prime worked for GCHQ in London from 1968 until 1976, when he was made a section head at GCHQ Cheltenham, site of the joint U.S.-British electronic listening that experts say would have processed Gamma Guppy intercepts.

CIA spokesman Kathy Pherson declined to comment, saying the agency does not comment on "internal" CIA matters. Mr. Perle, who is in Moscow taking part in arms control negotiations, could not be reached for comment.